

# **Catawba County Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating Guidelines**

## Tactical Radio Frequencies

Tactical radio channels are available to be used for the following purposes:

- To relieve radio traffic congestion on agency dispatch frequencies during multi-agency responses.
- To provide for common and unified on-scene communications.
- To provide dedicated communications channels for specific on-scene operations.

It is expressly forbidden to use the tactical radio channels for the following:

- As a talk around channel for non-essential radio traffic.
- For routine administrative communications that can be accomplished by other communications methods.

Examples of tactical channel usage are:

- Multi-agency responses (MVA with entrapment, working fires with multiple agencies)
- Multi-unit responses within the same agency (three EMS units coordinating response on the same call, working fires involving one fire department)
- Responses which continue for long time frames (searches, STAR Team responses, working fires)
- Training exercises (live burns, mass casualty drills)
- Unified command situations
- Special events with Emergency Services presence (festivals, large gatherings).

Agencies will not use tactical channels for events such as fund-raisers or other non-emergency responses. These agencies will use other frequencies or communications methods for these type events.

### **Procedure for requesting tactical channels:**

Tactical channels will be assigned by the Catawba County Communications Center. Agencies will remain on their dispatch frequencies until the Communications Center has assigned a tactical channel(s) to the situation.

1. *On any response where the use of a tactical channel is appropriate (see guidelines above), the Incident Commander will request a tactical channel from the Catawba County Communications Center as soon as the need is identified.*
2. *The Catawba County Communications Center will assign a tactical channel to this incident and announce to all responding agencies which tactical channel has been assigned. Responding agencies will remain on their dispatch frequencies until they arrive on scene, unless they need to communicate with the Incident Commander.*

*Available Tactical Channels are:*

- 155.280
- Catawba County Fire 2
- State Fire
- Catawba County Local Government
- Law Enforcement Channel 2
- CCEMS 155.160

3. *Should multiple tactical channels be necessary for a single incident, the Incident Commander **and only** the Incident Commander will request the additional channels. The Catawba County Communications Center will assign the additional channels in sequence of channels (ex: .280 for on-scene operations, State Fire for Air operations).*
4. Since these tactical channels are simplex frequencies, the Incident Commander may need to switch back to his/her primary dispatch frequency (if it is a repeated channel) to communicate with the Communications Center if he/she is out of range.

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